

Eurasian Urbanisms: From the Imperial to the Post-Soviet

GU4044

Seminar

Spring 2018

3 credit hours

Instructor: Dr. Markian Dobczansky

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Meeting Time: Wednesday 2:10–4:00 p.m.

Location: Hamilton Hall 709

Office Hours: Thursday 2:00–4:00, IAB 1206



COURSE DESCRIPTION

Cities encapsulate the social, political, and economic processes of their time and studying them offers a window into the societies that produce them. This course explores the institution of the city across Eurasia from the nineteenth century to the present. Before World War I, rapid urbanization began to significantly alter how the Russian Empire was run, how its economy functioned, and how its various peoples interacted. With the rise of Soviet socialism, the “socialist city” became an object of

intense discussions, while experimental architecture, massive public works projects, and the Soviet forced labor economy changed the face of cities across Eurasia. The Cold War ushered in a new era of state-sponsored nuclear research, competition over consumer goods, and a new Soviet role in the so-called Third World. Finally, with the collapse of Soviet socialism, cities were simultaneously nationalized and globalized.

The Soviet city is at the core of the course, while its predecessors, imitators, and successors are also considered. In taking this course, students will examine broader processes and trends through focused case studies of cities such as Moscow, St. Petersburg/Leningrad, Tashkent, Lviv, and Berlin. Students will learn to think about these cities in a comparative context as well as to tease out what was specific to the experience of socialism. By examining primary sources, scholarly work on urban history, and films, students will become familiar with the urban experience in Eurasia and how it has been portrayed.

GRADING

The final course grade is made up of two different elements: class participation and writing assignments. Students must accumulate 100 points to complete the course. Students may choose which written assignments to complete in order to receive points. During the first three weeks of the course, students must make an appointment with the instructor in order to discuss their academic interests and experiences, and communicate to the professor their ideas for completing written assignments.

Class participation—25 points total. This portion of the grade is made up of class attendance (5 points), participation in class discussions (10 points), and discussion leadership as assigned and agreed upon in class (10 points). Students cannot miss more than one class session for any reason.

Written assignments—75 points total. This portion of the grade is made up of written work. Students may choose which combination of assignments will add up to 75 points. One written assignment must be submitted by the beginning of class during **Week 4**.

Source analysis—15 points (1,000–1,200 words). The student will analyze a primary source that is assigned for class or an instructor-approved alternative primary source. The analysis should use a historical approach to explain what the source reveals about the historical period in which it was written, drawing on course concepts. Must have a clear argument and cite evidence.

Book review—15 points (800–1000 words). The student will review a book from the list of additional reading appended to the syllabus or another book

approved by the instructor. The format should be an academic book review that evaluates the book's goals, methodology, argument, and use of evidence.

Film review—15 points (1,000–1,200 words). The student will write an analysis of a film shown in class or an instructor-approved alternative film that demonstrates how the film engages course topics. Analyses can contextualize the film in its historical era, seek to identify its ideological message, or critique its approach to its subject. Must have a clear argument and cite evidence.

Literature review/historiographical essay—45 points (2,500–3,000 words). Must cover at least 5 secondary sources and provide a compelling overview of issues raised in the course. The work should show how various authors whose work is being reviewed have approached their topic. For some helpful guidance, please see <http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/advice/specific-types-of-writing/literature-review>

Research paper—60 points (3,000–4,000 words). An original research paper on a topic agreed upon with the instructor. The paper must have a clear argument, cite evidence to support its assertions, and be based on original research.

DEVICE POLICY

Computers and mobile devices are an integral part of our lives. However, in the classroom, they can become profoundly distracting and detract from academic discussion. Students must set all mobile devices to silent and should not use their computers for purposes of note-taking. Accommodations for students with a documented need to use computers in the classroom should approach the instructor to discuss the issue further in private.

DISABILITY ACCOMMODATIONS

If you are a student with a disability and have a DS-certified “Accommodation Letter” please come to my office hours to confirm your accommodation needs. If you believe that you might have a disability that requires accommodation, you should contact Disability Services at 212-854-2388 and disability@columbia.edu

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY STATEMENT

The intellectual venture in which we are all engaged requires of faculty and students alike the highest level of personal and academic integrity. As members of an academic community, each one of us bears the responsibility to participate in

scholarly discourse and research in a manner characterized by intellectual honesty and scholarly integrity.

Scholarship, by its very nature, is an iterative process, with ideas and insights building one upon the other. Collaborative scholarship requires the study of other scholars' work, the free discussion of such work, and the explicit acknowledgement of those ideas in any work that inform our own. This exchange of ideas relies upon a mutual trust that sources, opinions, facts, and insights will be properly noted and carefully credited. In practical terms, this means that, as students, you must be responsible for the full citations of others' ideas in all of your research papers and projects; you must be scrupulously honest when taking your examinations; you must always submit your own work and not that of another student, scholar, or internet agent.

Any breach of this intellectual responsibility is a breach of faith with the rest of our academic community. It undermines our shared intellectual culture, and it cannot be tolerated. Students failing to meet these responsibilities should anticipate being asked to leave Columbia.

For more, please refer to the Columbia University Undergraduate Guide to Academic Integrity: <https://www.college.columbia.edu/academics/academicintegrity>

REQUIRED TEXTS

All course readings will be available in one of the following locations: on reserve at Butler Library, in electronic format through Butler Library, or on CourseWorks.

OPTIONAL TEXTS

Students might like to read a textbook on Russian/Soviet history as background reading. For this course, I recommend Ron Suny's *The Soviet Experiment: Russia, the USSR, and the Successor States* (2nd edition, Oxford, 2010). They may also like to consult a brief comparative work on cities in history, such as Joel Kotkin, *The City: A Global History* (New York: The Modern Library, 2005).

WEEKLY COURSE SCHEDULE

Part I: The Russian Empire

Week 1: Jan 17

Introduction—Cities in Global History and Useful Comparisons

- Joel Kotkin. *The City: A Global History*. New York: The Modern Library, 2005. PAGES xix–xxii, 85–108.

Week 2: Jan 24

Colonial City, Imperial Metropole

- Jeff Sahadeo. *Russian Colonial Society in Tashkent*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010. PAGES 1–56.
- Mark D. Steinberg. *Petersburg Fin de Siècle*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011. PAGES 1–46.

Week 3: Jan 31

The Perils of Urbanization

- Leopold Haimson. “The Problem of Social Stability in Urban Russia, 1905–1917” Parts 1 and 2. *Slavic Review* (1964–65).
- PRIMARY SOURCE: Semën Ivanovich Kanatchikov. *A Radical Worker in Tsarist Russia: The Autobiography of Semën Ivanovich Kanatchikov*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1986. PAGES 1–23, 27–36, 50–79.

Part II: The Socialist City in Revolutionary Times

Week 4: Feb 7

*** FIRST WRITTEN ASSIGNMENT DUE ***

Socialism and City Planning

- Stephen Kotkin, “The Search for the Socialist City.” *Russian History/Histoire Russe* 23, no. 1–4 (1996): 231–63.
- S. Frederick Starr. “Visionary Town Planning during the Cultural Revolution.” In *Cultural Revolution in Russia, 1928–1931*, edited by Sheila Fitzpatrick, 207–40. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1978.
- FILM: *Man with a Movie Camera*, Dziga Vertov (1929)

Week 5: Feb 14

World Capital of Socialism

- Karl Schlögel. *Moscow, 1937*. Translated by Rodney Livingstone. Malden, Mass.: Polity, 2012. PAGES 33–53, 544–557.
- Katerina Clark. *Moscow, the Fourth Rome: Stalinism, Cosmopolitanism, and the Evolution of Soviet Culture, 1931–1941*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2011. PAGES 1–41, 78–104.

Week 6: Feb 21

Crash Industrialization and the Cityscape

- Stephen Kotkin. *Magnetic Mountain: Stalinism as a Civilization*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995. PAGES 106–145.
- Andrew Jenks. “A Metro on the Mount: The Underground as a Church of Soviet Civilization.” *Technology and Culture* 41, no. 4 (2000): 697–724.
- PRIMARY SOURCE: Lazar Kaganovich. *The Socialist Reconstruction of Moscow and Other Cities in the USSR* (1931)

Week 7: Feb 28

Gulag Town, Company Town

- Alan Barenberg. *Gulag Town, Company Town: Forced Labor and its Legacy in Vorkuta*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014. Introduction, Chapters 2, 3, and 5.
- PRIMARY SOURCE: Fyodor Vasilevich Mochulsky. *Gulag Boss: A Soviet Memoir*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2011. PAGES xxxv–xxvii, 1–21, 142–155, 165–172.

Week 8: Mar 7

Sovietization: Spreading Socialism Westward

- Tarik Amar *The Paradox of Ukrainian Lviv: A Borderland City between Stalinists, Nazis, and Nationalists*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2015. PAGES 1–21 and 185–220.
- Gregor Thum. *Uprooted: How Breslau became Wrocław during the Century of Expulsions*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011. PAGES 171–189, 217–287.

March 12–16—SPRING RECESS, NO CLASSES

Part III: Urbanization Inside and Outside the USSR

Week 9: Mar 21

Cold War Competition I: Consumer Goods

- Greg Castillo. *Cold War on the Home Front: The Soft Power of Midcentury Design*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010. PAGES vii–xxiv, 139–208.
- Paul Stronski. *Tashkent: Forging a Soviet City*. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2010. PAGES 234–256.

Week 10: Mar 28

Cold War Competition II: Nuclear Cities

- Kate Brown. *Plutopia: Nuclear Families, Atomic Cities, and the Great Soviet and American Plutonium Disaster*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2013. PAGES 3–164.

Week 11: Apr 4

Room to Breathe, the Quiet Privatization of City Spaces

- Steven Harris. "Soviet Mass Housing and the Communist Way of Life." In *Everyday Life in Russia Past and Present*, edited by Choi Chatterjee, David L. Ransel, Mary Cavender, and Karen Petrone, 181–202. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2015.
- FILM: *Cheryomushki*, Gerbert Rappoport (1963)

Week 12: Apr 11

Berlin: Divided Metropolis

- Brian Ladd. *The Ghosts of Berlin: Confronting German History in the Urban Landscape*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998. PAGES 1–39, 175–235.

Part IV: Post-Socialism, Nationalism, and Globalization

Week 13: Apr 18

Post-Soviet City: Mélange of Styles

- Morgan Liu, *Under Solomon's Throne: Uzbek Visions of Renewal in Osh*. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2012. PAGES 1–104, 185–199.

Week 14: Apr 25

*** FINAL WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS DUE ***

Post-Soviet City: Narratives and Memories in Flux

- Nida Gelazis, John Czaplicka, and Blair A. Ruble, eds. *Cities After the Fall of Communism: Reshaping Cultural Landscapes and European Identity*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009. PAGES 53–74, 167–194, and 335–346.

FOR FURTHER READING

- Bilenky, Serhiy. *Imperial Urbanism in the Borderlands: Kyiv, 1800–1905*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2017.
- Brown, Kate. “Gridded Lives: Why Kazakhstan and Montana are Nearly the Same Place.” *The American Historical Review* 106, no. 1 (2001): 17–48.
- Clark, Katerina. *Petersburg, Crucible of Cultural Revolution*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1995.
- Cohen, Gary B. *The Politics of Ethnic Survival: Germans in Prague, 1861–1914*. 2nd ed. West Lafayette, IN: Purdue University Press, 2006.
- Colton, Timothy J. *Moscow: Governing the Socialist Metropolis*. Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1995.
- Czaplicka, John, Nida Gelazis, and Blair A. Ruble, eds. *Cities after the Fall of Communism: Reshaping Cultural Landscapes and European Identity*. Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2009.
- Czaplicka, John J. and Blair A. Ruble, eds. With assistance of Lauren Crabtree. *Composing Urban History and the Constitution of Civic Identities*. Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2003.
- DeHaan, Heather D. *Stalinist City Planning: Professionals, Performance, and Power*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2013.
- Duncan, James S. *The City as Text: The Politics of Landscape Interpretation in the Kandyian Kingdom*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990.
- Hamm, Michael F. *Kiev: A Portrait, 1800–1917*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1993.
- Herlihy, Patricia. *Odessa: A History, 1794–1914*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1986.
- Hoffmann, David L. *Peasant Metropolis: Social Identities in Moscow, 1929–1941*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994.
- Josephson, Paul R. *New Atlantis Revisited: Akademgorodok, the Siberian City of Science*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1997.
- Khiterer, Viktoriia. *Jewish City or Inferno of Russian Israel? A History of the Jews in Kiev before February 1917*. Brighton, Mass.: Academic Studies Press, 2016.

- Kotkin, Joel. *The City: A Global History*. New York: The Modern Library, 2005.
- Kotkin, Stephen. *Steeltown, USSR: Soviet Society in the Gorbachev Era*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991.
- Lebow, Katherine. *Unfinished Utopia: Nowa Huta, Stalinism, and Polish Society, 1949–56*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2013.
- Lefebvre, Henri. *The Production of Space*. Translated by Donald Nicholson-Smith. Oxford: Blackwell, 1991.
- Mëhilli, Elidor. "The Socialist Design: Urban Dilemmas in Postwar Europe and the Soviet Union." *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 13, no. 3 (2012): 635–65.
- Miliutin, Nikolai Aleksandrovich. *Sotsgorod: The Problem of Building Socialist Cities*. Cambridge, Mass.: M.I.T. Press, 1974.
- Risch, William Jay. *The Ukrainian West: Culture and the Fate of Empire in Soviet Lviv*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2011.
- Ruble, Blair. *Leningrad: Shaping a Soviet City*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990.
- Sahadeo, Jeff. *Russian Colonial Society in Tashkent: 1865–1923*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010.
- Schorske, Carl. *Fin-De-Siècle Vienna: Politics and Culture*. New York: Vintage Books, 1981.
- Schlögel, Karl. *Moscow, 1937*. Translated by Rodney Livingstone. Malden, Mass.: Polity, 2012.
- Scott, James C. *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998.
- Soja, Edward J. *Thirdspace: Journeys to Los Angeles and Other Real-and-Imagined Places*. Malden, Mass.: Blackwell, 1996.
- White, Richard. *The Organic Machine*. New York: Hill and Wang, 1995.
- Zarecor, Kimberly Elman. "What Was So Socialist about the Socialist City? Second World Urbanity in Europe." *Journal of Urban History* (2017)